

# Frederick Capreol dogged

Man who gave Capreol its name persisted in solving friend's murder

**TOM VILLEMARE**  
COLUMNIST

Frederick Chase Capreol had his dodgier moments, but he had a quick mind and — when it counted — instincts that would have made Sherlock Holmes proud.

He was born June 10, 1803, in England and arrived in Canada at the age of 25 after receiving a commercial education.

Capreol was a smooth talker, but when talk wouldn't do, he wasn't above using alcohol or exploiting some other weakness to get a deal done.

At one point in order to make a land purchase, he used copious amounts of alcohol to put the seller in the mood. The man was a notorious drunk and when he realized what had happened, challenged the deal in court. The court overturned the deal.

But when Capreol heard his children chatting about a murder and discovered it was the murder of a longtime Richmond Hill friend, Thomas Kinnear, he sprang into action in a way that demonstrated his amazing tenacity:

■ He literally ran from his house to the nearest police station, on Wellington Street in Toronto, where he was told nothing would be done until morning. Outraged, he replied, "the rascals could be in the States by then."

■ He overheard that a wagon was seen travelling quickly from the crime scene in Richmond Hill towards the Toronto docks.

■ He went to the Toronto mayor's home, which was in darkness, hammering on the door and demanding the authority to arrest the suspects. (The mayor poked his head out the window, saying a detective would be assigned in the morning and closed the window.)

■ He ran to the Church Street

wharf to hire a steamer, The Transit, but the captain wanted \$100. Capreol gave him the \$13 he had and told him to warm up the engines and he'd be back with more money.

■ He literally bumped into a friend who refused to back "such a harebrained scheme."

■ He ran to another friend who lived above a store on King Street. He hammered on the door but ran to the back of the building when he realized his friend's bedroom was there. Confronted with a high wall, he used a pen knife to chip toe-holds, then scaled that wall and a second wall using a drain pipe, finally swinging himself into the friend's bedroom using the strings from window blinds. Once he convinced his friend (who, unsurprisingly, attacked the "intruder" and almost shoved him back out the window) to let him go, he left with the money and a change of clothes. (His had become torn and bloody from his efforts.)

■ He ran back to the boat, but by now the local constable, George Kingsmill, was chasing Capreol because of the commotion. As Capreol ran to the steamer and it pulled from the dock, Kingsmill jumped to the boat. Kingsmill landed in the lake and had to be pulled to the deck by Capreol. Kingsmill demanded the boat return to the dock, but Capreol refused.

On arrival at Lewiston, New York, on Capreol's intuition, they found the suspects, two employees of Kinnear, at a hotel near the port.

The murderers confessed at their trial.

Capreol was never compensated for his expenses or recognized for his efforts.

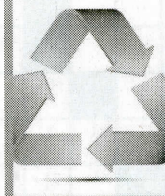
However, he did have modest success promoting railways in central and Northern Ontario, and for that, a rail junction bears his name, Capreol.

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Frederick Capreol

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